Sr Mukherjea O, Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

cordifolia), Pipal (*Ficus religiosus, Willd*), Palas (*Butea frondosa*) lac-bearing Kusum (*Schleichera trijuga*) are the flora here to be seen in profusion.

Of these, the most predominant and characteristic tree to the Santal areas is the Sal, called *Sarjom* by them, and its distribution is general. It is a tree yielding a hard timber, straight and tall and shining with glossy leaves. It is holy with them, and with it they make their Jahèrthan, (*Holy Grove*). Such straggling clusters of Sal trees are found all over the countryside near Santal hamlets. The Sal serves them the same purpose as the bamboo to the rest of the population. With its leaves they make leaf-cups and plates and its timber invariably goes to their house-building. More useful is the Mohua. Its flower contains sugar and is therefore sweet to eat and nutritious too. The Santal preserves it as food by drying it in the sun and it serves them well for months to come. It serves the same purpose as the mango and the jack-fruit to the rest of the population, who during those seasons take them as their chief diet. The pulp of the fruit is eaten and its kernel yields an oil which is chiefly used by the tribe for their culinary purposes.

March and April are months of joy for the Santal like the Cherry-blossom season in Japan. The Mohua and Sal trees are then in full blossom with their whitish flowers. In the early morning one sees

3i Mukherjea O, Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

Santal food. "A Santal will manage to live where even a rat would starve," said a Missionary to Man more than seventy[1] years ago ; and wandering in the Santal lands we heard comments, "O, they will eat anything that flies except aeroplanes and anything that swims except boats." 262

They eat almost all the available kinds of fish and crabs and have a great relish for meat, which they preserve in a way of their own. We saw at the house of Sham Mārndi, a village Chowkidar, that a pig sacrificed during the June sowing festival was being cut to pieces, and learnt that these would be dried in the sun for three days after being mixed with salt. At the time of cooking, these pieces, soaked in water and mixed with salt and turmeric, would be placed on ovens in earthen pots. The Santal would fry the whole with "mohua" oil if available, and thereafter mix it with water and boil it for half an hour, chillies broken to pieces.being added to improve the taste. Fowl is a luxury to be eaten on festive occasions and when a guest arrives in the house. It is cooked in a similar process. With an embarrassed look the Santals confessed that they eat carrion, but added that they cook it in an outer house, which implied that under the influence of Hindus they have come to look upon it as a pollution. 251 262 252 262 262 [177] [183]

1 Ref. Man, *Sonthalia and the Sonthals.*

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1902
AW42 Santal AW42

262 Another article of food, called "Hàṇḍuà," pre-
252 pared from the young shoots of the bamboo is relished by them. We learn that when the shoots of the bamboo are a foot or so above the ground they are gathered and taken home. They are then cut into thin slices and ground in the "ḍheñki" (*husking implement*) into a kind of flour. This flour is put into a pot, the air being excluded, and
[251] allowed to stand for three days. It is then taken out and spread upon a flat stone and dried. It is then "hàṇḍuà" and is used to make "utu" (*relish*) and "bhàrtà" (*chutney*).[1]

262 Among fruits eaten raw, "Ul" (mango), ripe
252 "Matkòm" (Beng. *Mohua* ; *Bassia Latifolia*), ripe
137 "Kaṇthaṛ" (jack-fruit, *Artocarpus Integrifolia*, Linn.), ripe figs (Santali, *Loa* ; the fruit of *Ficus glomerata*, Roxb.), "Banyan fruit" (*Ficus Bengalensis*, Roxb ; Santali, *Bare*), "Terel" (*Kendu*, Oriya, Beng. *Gab* ; *Diospyros Tomentosa*), "Tarop" (Charkuli, Oriya; *Buchanania latifolia*), "Kankuri" [(Oriya Cucumber; *Cucumis sativus*, Linn.)] and "Bhurudu" (Santali for a jungle produce, *Gardenia S.P.*) deserve mention.

Fruits also constitute items in kitchen delicacies and green-mangoes (*Mangifera Indica*), tamarind (*Tamarindus Indica*), the peel of the "mohua" fruit,

1 Ref.: Dr. Campbell's *Santali to English Dictionary*, p. 234.

342
252
351

and night. As a rule they cook their food outside, but always have a fire-place inside. During the cold season they generally cook their food inside, the result being that the house specially at night, is suffocatingly full of smoke and every thing becomes covered with soot. This does not, however, seem to affect the Santals much. In the bed-room they store their rice and all other belongings, and the fowls are kept too in that room at night. It is, of course, not possible to keep such a house clean, even if they tried to do so.

[354]
342
[251]
[352]
[356]

Agriculture :—The Santals before becoming, agriculturists were probably in the hunting stage. Still, nothing pleases them so much as to be out for hunting, they even now observe the "Dehiri hunting", which is an annual hunt. During the time of the annual hunt the Dehiri priest performs certain ceremonies to propitiate "Sin Bonga" to avert calamity during hunting. All these suggest that prior to becoming agriculturists the Santals were in the hunting stage. At present the Santals are typical agriculturists. There is no authentic record when the Santal first started tilling the soil. Rev. Bodding in his memoir, "How the Santals live" has mentioned their first attempt at cultivation in the following words :—

224
[174]
[093]
241
241
174

"It is just possible that one of their first attempts to get something out of the soil may have been something like what is now called 'kurau', a mode of cultivation that is said to have been used also by Santals in former years, but is not practised by them at the present time, so far as is known. It is, however, still kept up by the Paharias living on the hills of the Santal country. A piece of jungle is cut down high up

[178]
241
171